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TO: Dr. Joel Boyd, Superintendent of Schools

FROM: Liam Skinner, Chief Schools Officer

DATE: September 21, 2021

RE: *2021 Spring MCAS Results*

2021 Spring MCAS Results

In spring 2021, more than 6,100 students of Lowell Public Schools in grades 3–8 and 10 participated in at least one MCAS test, with an average participation rate of 88% in grades 3-8 and 83-85% in high school compared to the statewide rate of 93-97% at grades 3-8 and 89-90% for high school ELA and mathematics.

In 2021, students in grades 3-8 took abridged versions of the test and many students took the exam at home. These circumstances, coupled with the stress and disruption of the pandemic, had an effect on results across the state and in our district.

In an effort to support students, families, and schools, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) implemented a number of flexibilities, including some that were made available by the U.S. Department of Education and the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) in acknowledgement of the challenges of the pandemic.

For grades 3 - 8, these changes included lengthening the test administration windows until almost the end of the school year, shortening the testing experience (students took only one session of the tests instead of two sessions), and allowing students who were learning remotely at the time of testing to take the assessments remotely.

For high school, testing windows were extended and began later in the year. In addition, in April 2021, BESE voted to allow students in the class of 2022 to be awarded a modified competency determination (CD) in ELA and mathematics upon district certification that the student earned full credit for a relevant course in that subject matter. Students in the class of 2022 were still permitted to voluntarily participate in testing for scholarship purposes.

Table 1 provides information about the spring 2021 test administrations, including administration dates and numbers of sessions. All MCAS test administrations are untimed. The Department provides recommended session lengths to assist schools with planning.

Table 1: Spring 2021 MCAS Test Administrations

Test	Administration Dates	Number of Sessions
Grades 3 - 5 ELA, Math and STE (grade 5)	May 10 - June 11	1
Grades 6 - 8 ELA, Math and STE (grade 8)	May 17 - June 11	1
Grade 10 ELA	May 3 - June 4	2
Grade 10 Math	May 3 - June 4	2
Grade 10 STE	June 1 - June 11	2

MCAS test sessions are composed of a variety of questions types, and the number of questions and score points varies by grade and subject.

Student results on the MCAS tests are reported using scaled scores and achievement levels. Students receive a separate score and attain a separate achievement level in each subject area. In this report, performance at the district level is summarized using the percentage of students attaining each achievement level. Analyses at this point are only illustrative of the 2021 test administration and at the district level.

District-wide Achievement Level Results:

This section reports district-level results from the spring 2021 MCAS tests by achievement level. In the figures and tables in this section, results for the ELA and Mathematics tests at grades 3–8 and 10, and the STE tests at grades 5 and 8, are reported using the next-generation achievement levels (Exceeding Expectations, Meeting Expectations, Partially Meeting Expectations, Not Meeting Expectations). Results for the high school STE tests are reported using the legacy achievement levels (*Advanced, Proficient, Needs Improvement, Failing*).

Student Achievement on Next-Generation Tests in Grades 3–8 and 10

Figure 1 and Tables 2 & 2A show the percentage of students scoring at each achievement level on the 2020 next-generation ELA tests.[1] The percentage of students, illustrated in Figure 1, scoring Meeting Expectations or higher ranged from a high of 47% at grade 10 to a low of 22% at grade 8. The percentage of students by student group, scoring Meeting Expectations or higher ranged from a high of 33% for Asian, White and 32% for Multi-racial, Non-Hispanic and 32% for Female students to a low of 6% for Students with Disabilities.

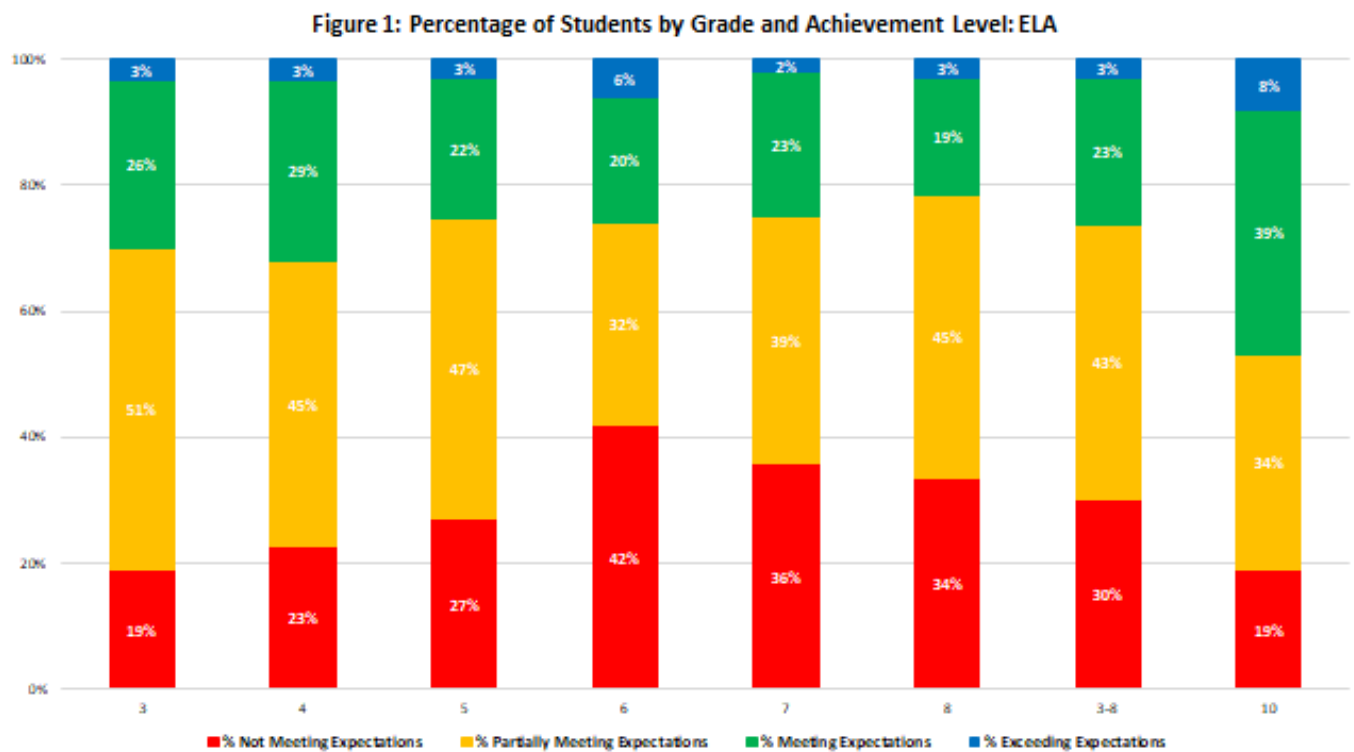


Table 2: Percentage of Students by Student Group and Achievement Level - ELA

Student Group	Not Meeting Expectations	Partially Meeting Expectations	Meeting Expectations	Exceeding Expectations
All Students	30%	43%	23%	4%
Female	26%	42%	27%	5%
Male	34%	43%	20%	2%
EL and Former EL Students	37%	44%	16%	2%
High Needs	35%	44%	19%	2%
Economically Disadvantaged	36%	43%	19%	2%
Students with Disabilities	65%	30%	5%	1%
Tested In-Person	31%	44%	23%	3%
Tested Remotely	26%	45%	25%	4%

Table 2A: Percentage of Students by Racial Group and Achievement Level - ELA

Student Group	Not Meeting Expectations	Partially Meeting Expectations	Meeting Expectations	Exceeding Expectations
Afri. Ameri./Black	31%	45%	22%	2%
Asian	22%	45%	28%	5%
Hispanic/Latino	40%	42%	16%	2%
Amer. Ind. or Alaska Nat.	-	-	-	-
White	26%	41%	28%	5%
Nat. Haw. or Pacif. Isl.	-	-	-	-
Multi-race, Non-Hisp./Lat.	25%	42%	28%	4%

Figure 2 and Tables 3 & 3A shows the percentage of students scoring at each achievement level on the 2020 next-generation Mathematics tests. The percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or higher, illustrated in Figure 2, ranged from a high of 39% at grade 10 to a low of 15% at grade 5. The percentage of students by student group, scoring Meeting Expectations or higher ranged from a high of 29% for Asian and 19% for Male students to a low of 3% for Students with Disabilities. and 9% for Hispanic/Latino students.

Figure 2: Percentage of Students by Grade and Achievement Level: Math

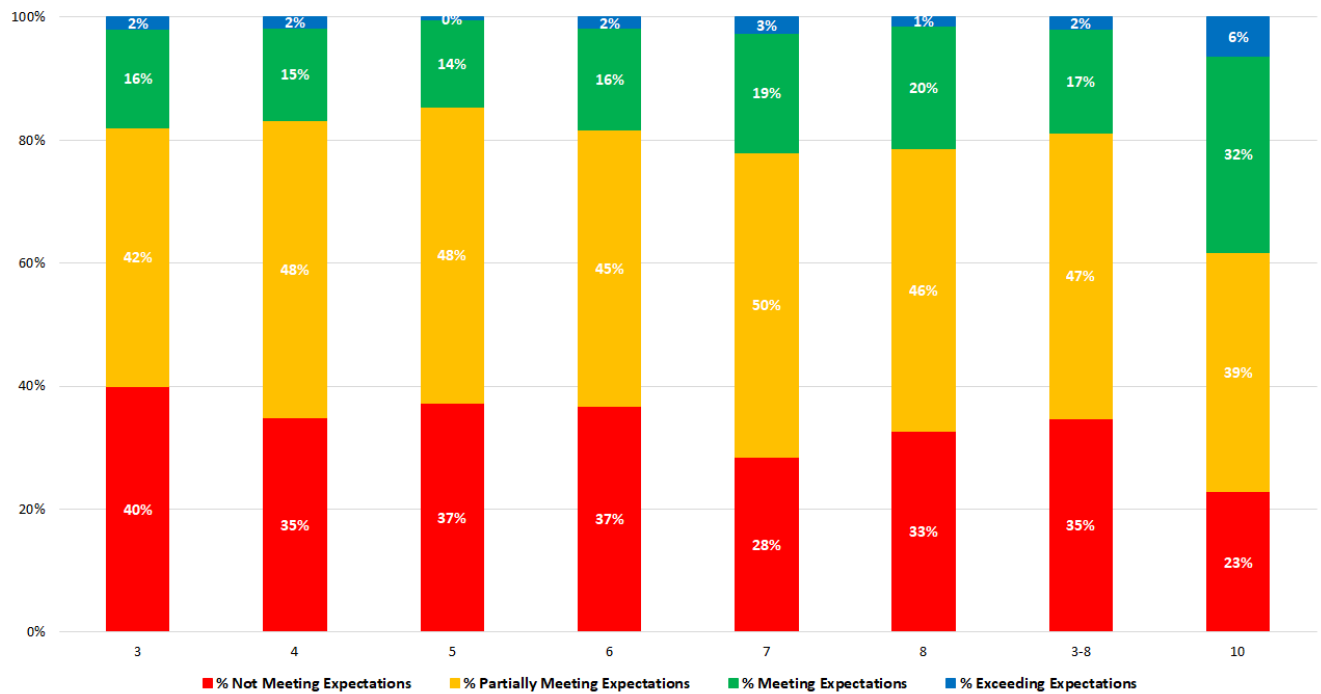


Table 3: Percentage of Students by Student Group and Achievement Level - Math

Student Group	Not Meeting Expectations	Partially Meeting Expectations	Meeting Expectations	Exceeding Expectations
All Students	35%	47%	17%	2%
Female	35%	47%	16%	1%
Male	35%	46%	17%	2%
EL and Former EL Students	40%	44%	14%	1%
High Needs	40%	46%	13%	1%
Economically Disadvantaged	41%	46%	12%	1%
Students with Disabilities	67%	29%	3%	0%
Tested in-Person	37%	46%	15%	1%
Tested Remotely	27%	50%	21%	3%

Table 3A: Percentage of Students by Racial Group and Achievement Level - Math

Student Group	Not Meeting Expectations	Partially Meeting Expectations	Meeting Expectations	Exceeding Expectations
Afri. Ameri./Black	41%	46%	11%	1%
Asian	23%	48%	26%	3%
Hispanic/Latino	46%	44%	9%	0%
Amer. Ind. or Alaska Nat.	-	-	-	-
White	31%	48%	19%	2%
Nat. Haw. or Pacif. Isl.	-	-	-	-
Multi-race, Non-Hisp./Lat.	31%	48%	19%	2%

In 2019, next-generation STE tests were first administered in grades 5 and 8. Figure 3 and Tables 4 & 4A shows the percentage of students at each achievement level in both grades on the STE tests. In 2020, 16 percent of students districtwide scored Meeting Expectations or higher, as illustrated in Figure 3, on the grades 5 and 8 STE test. The percentage of students by student group, scoring Meeting Expectations or higher ranged from a high of 25% for Multi-race, Non-Hisp./Lat. and 17% for Male students to a low of 2% for Students with Disabilities and 9% for African-American students.

Figure 3: Percentage of Students by Grade and Achievement Level: STE

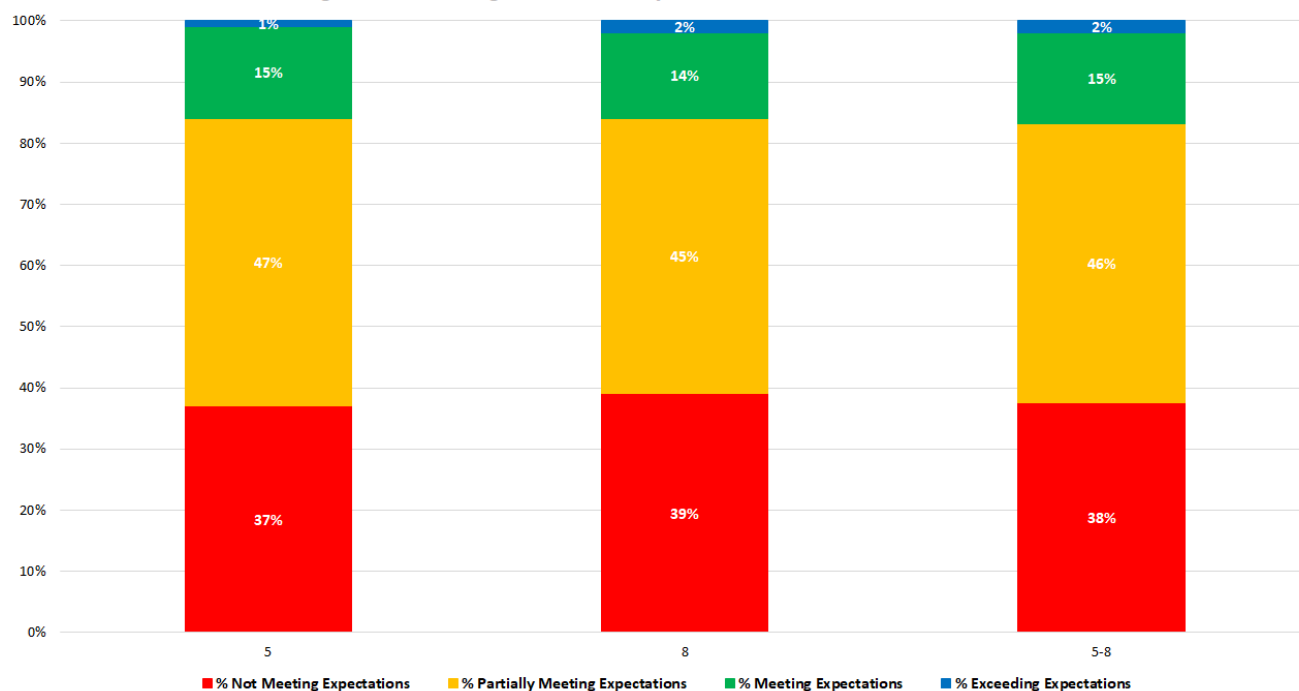


Table 4: Percentage of Students by Student Group and Achievement Level - STE

Student Group	Not Meeting Expectations	Partially Meeting Expectations	Meeting Expectations	Exceeding Expectations
All Students	38%	46%	15%	2%
Female	37%	47%	14%	1%
Male	39%	45%	15%	2%
EL and Former EL Students	46%	45%	9%	1%
High Needs	43%	46%	10%	1%
Economically Disadvantaged	44%	45%	10%	1%
Students with Disabilities	68%	30%	2%	0%
Tested In-Person	36%	47%	15%	2%
Tested Remotely	36%	48%	16%	1%

Table 4A: Percentage of Students by Racial Group and Achievement Level - STE

Student Group	Not Meeting Expectations	Partially Meeting Expectations	Meeting Expectations	Exceeding Expectations
Afri. Ameri./Black	46%	46%	8%	1%
Asian	29%	52%	17%	2%
Hispanic/Latino	47%	43%	10%	1%
Amer. Ind. or Alaska Nat.	-	-	-	-
White	32%	44%	21%	3%
Nat. Haw. or Pacif. Isl.	-	-	-	-
Multi-race, Non-Hisp./Lat.	29%	46%	21%	4%

Next Steps:

The District will use this information as a diagnostic and instructional tool as a way to garner information on the individual students that are currently sitting in front of us. For instance, school leaders can use this information to see which standards students performed well and not so well on, and work to fill in gaps. In addition, school leaders will be able to use this assessment data in conjunction with other assessment tools to help improve student learning.

While it is recommended by DESE that comparisons between the 2021 MCAS assessments and prior years is reliable at the aggregate level (school level, district level, state level), caution should be taken given that participation rates varied across schools, districts, and student groups in 2021 more than in prior years. If the participation rate for a particular student group was lower in 2021 than in prior years, for example, results could be influenced by such a factor.